6.   Useful Links

6.1 User Notes

User notes contain additional information about a geographic entity's shapefile that is not available in this technical documentation. In addition, if errors are found in the TIGER/Line Shapefiles, such as duplicate records or missing attribute information, user notes are created to explain the errors and the corrections made.

User notes can be found from the main TIGER/Line Shapefile webpage: http://www.census.gov/geo/maps-data/data/tiger-line.html.

User notes are unique to each release of TIGER/Line Shapefiles and can be found by clicking on the appropriate year's tab.

6.2 Help Documents

6.2.1 How to Guides

How to Guides provide a short overview on how to access and use the TIGER/Line Shapefiles, as well as joining data from the U.S. Census Bureau to the TIGER/Line Shapefiles. The guides are available here: http://www.census.gov/geo/education/howtos.html.

6.2.2 Definitions

Additional information about each geographic entity, available as a TIGER/Line Shapefile, can be found in several formats. For basic definitions, visit the Geographic Terms and Concepts page: http://www.census.gov/geo/reference/terms.html.

This site provides definitions of geographic terms and concepts for geographic entities found in the TIGER/Line Shapefiles and other U.S. Census Bureau data products.

For more in depth information, blog posts and brochures offer a more detailed look at some of the geographic entities available in shapefile format. Blog posts can be found here: http://www.census.gov/geo/education/blogs.html.

Brochures can be found here: http://www.census.gov/geo/education/brochures.html.

For specific information about each state's geographic entities, history, rankings, and more, you can read the Guide to State and Local Census Geography pages here: http://www.census.gov/geo/reference/geoguide.html.

The definitions for several of the codes found in the attributes of the TIGER/Line Shapefiles can be found at the following links:

MAF/TIGER Feature Classifications Codes (MTFCC): http://www.census.gov/geo/reference/mtfcc.html

Legal/Statistical Area Description (LSAD) Codes: http://www.census.gov/geo/reference/lsad.html

Class (CLASSFP) Codes:
http://www.census.gov/geo/reference/class.html

Functional Status (FUNCSTAT) Codes:
http://www.census.gov/geo/reference/funcstat.html

6.3 Additional TIGER Products for use in a GIS

6.3.1 TIGER Geodatabases
TIGER Geodatabases are spatial extracts from the U.S. Census Bureau's MAF/TIGER database for use with Esri's ArcGIS. The geodatabases contain both national and state coverage for boundaries and features. These files provide a way for data users to access larger amounts of geographic data with one download, however, the files are large. Technical documentation for the TIGER Geodatabases is available. These files are available here:
http://www.census.gov/geo/maps-data/data/tiger-geodatabases.html.

6.3.2 TIGER/Line Shapefiles and Geodatabases Prejoined with Demographic Data
A limited set of TIGER/Line Shapefiles and TIGER Geodatabases are available pre-joined with demographic data, including the 2010 Census and the American Community Survey. These files attempt to make GIS analysis and thematic mapmaking easier because they provide the data user with the geography and demographic data in one download. Each file also contains a metadata file to provide additional information about the demographic data included. Access these files here:
http://www.census.gov/geo/maps-data/data/tiger-data.html.

6.3.3 Cartographic Boundary Files
The cartographic boundary files are simplified representations of selected geographic areas from the Census Bureau's MAF/TIGER database. These boundary files are specifically designed for small-scale, thematic mapping. In addition, these generalized files are clipped to the shoreline to show a simplified version of the U.S. outline. Cartographic boundary files are available in shapefile format for the 2010 Census, Census 2000, and selected geographies for other years. In addition, they are available in shapefile and KML format for 2013 and updates will be released annually one year after their corresponding TIGER/Line Shapefile release. KML stands for keyhole markup language and is a file format used to display geographic data in a tool such as Google Earth and Google Maps. The cartographic boundary files have less attribute information than the TIGER/Line Shapfiles and are not available for all the same geographic entities as the TIGER/Line Shapefiles. They can be downloaded from the following webpage:
http://www.census.gov/geo/maps-data/data/tiger-cart-boundary.html.